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Sheriff Lowers Estimate of Extra Inmate Beds Needed

Jail overcrowding: Revision could make it easier to find an alternative to the controversial planned expansion of the James A. Musick facility.

April 01, 1999 | JACK LEONARD | TIMES STAFF WRITER

In a move that could alter plans to build a controversial maximum-security jail near Irvine, Sheriff Mike Carona on Thursday lowered the projection for the number of inmate beds needed to ease overcrowding over the next decade.

In an interview with The Times, Carona said the county needs 5,100 extra beds by 2010 if it hopes to alleviate pressure on a jail system already bursting at the seams.

For some who oppose any expansion at James A. Musick Branch Jail, however, the revision offered nothing significant.

"Seven thousand, five thousand--it's just a number," Lake Forest Councilman Richard T. Dixon said. "We're all getting in a numbers game here, and no one's sitting down and thinking what these numbers mean. If [Carona] is saying, 'Well, gee, I need 5,000 more beds,' then we're talking about an extremely large facility."

The Orange County Board of Supervisors has approved building a 7,500-bed facility at Musick, which now has 1,100 beds. South County officials and residents have bitterly opposed the plan.

Carona, elected in November, ran on a platform that included opposition to expanding the site.

"I'd campaigned against putting a maximum-security prison so close to homes. I did not believe that there was a need for an additional 7,500 beds in the system," he said. "Now I'm at the point where I can say categorically that we don't need 7,500 beds, so I've lived up to my promise."

Carona said he hopes to keep working with South County officials who are searching for an alternative site to Musick. The new numbers, he said, should please many of those officials because finding a smaller site will be easier.

Irvine Mayor Christina L. Shea, an opponent of the Musick expansion, welcomed the new projection, which she said compares favorably with the estimate by Carona's predecessor, Brad Gates, that 7,500 to 10,000 new beds will be needed in the coming decade.

"I think for all of us, it's a better picture," Shea said. "It's a smaller nut to crack, so to speak. It's a more manageable number, but we still have to manage it."

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Alternative to Jail Expansion Remains Elusive

August 24, 1999 | JEAN O. PASCO | TIMES STAFF WRITER

It is by anyone's definition a monumental task: finding an acceptable place in Orange County to build a new jail.

Sheriff Michael S. Carona knew the pitfalls last year when he pledged to South County residents during his election campaign to do what he could to reverse the county's plans for expanding the 1,100-bed James A. Musick Branch Jail near Lake Forest.

Now, even as Carona met again Monday with a group of elected South County officials searching for new jail sites, roadblocks are apparent.

Carona is operating under a self-imposed March deadline to find a site acceptable to city and county officials and to come up with a plan that won't cost more than the estimated \$50-million expansion of the Musick facility.

In the last two weeks, the mere possibility of three sites being considered adjacent to the city of Orange drew howls of protest from Orange Mayor Joanne Coontz and former county Supervisor William G. Steiner. Both said the city already had done enough by agreeing to the county's expansion of the Theo Lacy Branch Jail.

The sites are near the Foothill toll road on land owned by the Irvine Co., whose officials have been meeting with committee members.

In light of the swift opposition from Orange, officials from Irvine and Lake Forest, as well as Carona and two anti-Musick county supervisors, were quick to issue assurances to Coontz that nothing had been decided.

But the sites near Orange remained among the leading alternatives when staffers from Irvine and Lake Forest delivered evaluations on 14 sites across the county in their meeting Monday. Drawing flak from a city near any of the sites would be "a serious sticking point," Supervisor Todd Spitzer said.

"We could never shove a jail down the city of Orange's throat or any other city," he said.

As for building a new jail somewhere else in Spitzer's sprawling east county district, he said: "I have no problem putting a jail in my district [if it is] away from homes."

Supervisor Tom Wilson, who also opposes the Musick expansion, said it will be "a serious challenge" to convince city officials that putting a jail near them "is the right thing to do for the county."

Any site ultimately chosen by the group also must be acceptable to a majority of the Board of Supervisors.

Supervisor Cynthia Coad, who succeeded Steiner in January, said she is open to alternatives to Musick because it is so close to homes. But Orange or Anaheim, the major cities in her district, would have to approve construction of any sites near them, she said.

"I would hope that there would be another site that would be suitable," Coad said.

Board Chairman Charles V. Smith said he too would be open to "something better" than Musick if proposed by Carona. But the new site couldn't cost any more than developing Musick. And Smith said that anything in his district would be off the table because there already are enough jails in central Orange County.

"I don't have any strong feeling that they're going to have any success," he said.

Supervisor Jim Silva is the staunchest supporter on the board for continuing with the county's plans to expand Musick by as many as 7,584 beds and include maximum-security inmates.

Silva said the county has spent an estimated \$30 million over the last 20 years in failed attempts to find a place to build another jail.

"We've had hearings, we've had battles; now we're ready to go," Silva said. "I can't see discarding all of the work that's been done."

Complicating the committee's goal is a deadline imposed by Carona for sealing a deal on a new jail site before March. That's when voters are expected to decide on an initiative that would forbid the building of 1,000 or more jail beds within half a mile of homes.

All of the proposed alternative sites are farther than a half-mile from homes. But the mere threat of the initiative led Carona to say months ago that, without an ironclad alternative, he must proceed with an expansion at Musick, which is 700 feet from the nearest homes.

The county also faces a federal court review in the coming year of its jail system, which has been under a federal judge's 1985 order to alleviate overcrowding.

Spitzer has proposed selling the 100 acres at Musick to pay for the costs of providing roads and utility service to a new remote site. He estimates the land

would bring \$100 million.

Normally, designating county property for sale requires a four-fifths vote of the board. If the deal could be struck before Dec. 31, however, the county could do so with only three votes because of special state legislation passed after the county's 1994 bankruptcy. That exemption expires on Jan. 1.

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FOCUS: ORANGE COUNTY COMMUNITY NEWS

Irvine

August 27, 1999 | Kristiane M. Ridgway, (949) 764-4309

Time is short for Irvine city officials in their scramble to help the Orange County Sheriff's Department find a site for a new maximum-security jail to avoid an expansion of the James A. Musick Branch Jail, located between Irvine and Lake Forest.

A handful of potential locations are under scrutiny by the city staff, which is charged with completing a detailed yet speedy analysis of each potential site.

"Because we're up against the Safe and Healthy Communities Initiative, we need to do something in the next month or two," Councilman Greg Smith said.

The initiative would require a two-thirds countywide vote to build or expand any jail of 1,000 or more beds within half a mile of homes.

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Irvine Delays Decision on Musick Jail

January 26, 2000 | KRISTIANE M. RIDGWAY | SPECIAL TO THE TIMES

For the second consecutive week, Irvine's City Council delayed action Tuesday on a proposal that could clear the way for an expansion of the James A. Musick Branch Jail.

The issue will be on next week's agenda, the council said in a brief announcement after a two-hour closed session.

The Orange County Board of Supervisors has voted to expand its 1,100-bed jail in Irvine into a maximum-security facility that would house 7,500 inmates. After an outcry from nearby residents, Irvine and Lake Forest filed a lawsuit to block the plan.

The Irvine council now is debating whether to accept a compromise with the county that would allow expansion of Musick to house 4,600 inmates at most.

Orange County Sheriff Mike Carona, who pledged during his election campaign to do what he could to reverse the Musick expansion, has pushed for a compromise and set a March deadline for reaching one. That is when county voters will decide Measure F, which would require a two-thirds majority to approve construction or expansion of any jail, airport or toxic landfill within half a mile of homes.

County officials still are seeking a site for a new jail. Carona and a selection committee have narrowed the possibilities to three or four, including Freemont Canyon near Orange and two others close to Irvine.

Orange County has been under a federal judge's order since 1985 to alleviate jail overcrowding.

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Irvine Council Delays Decision on Musick Jail Expansion Again

Officials slate a special Friday meeting to get public comment on turning the site into a maximum-security facility--and then will vote.

February 09, 2000 | KRISTIANE M. RIDGWAY | SPECIAL TO THE TIMES

For the third week in a row, the Irvine City Council delayed voting Tuesday on a proposal that could have cleared the way for an expansion of the James A. Musick Branch Jail.

"It's not been an easy discussion with the county and the sheriff," Mayor Christina L. Shea said. "We're trying to come up with the answer that makes the most sense for the community."

The council set a special session for 4 p.m. Friday at City Hall to hear public comment on the plan and will make a decision at that meeting.

The Orange County Board of Supervisors has voted to expand its 1,100-bed jail in Irvine into a maximum-security facility that would house 7,500 inmates. But Irvine and Lake Forest filed a lawsuit to block the plan after an outcry from residents.

The county recently presented the Irvine council with a compromise that would allow Musick to expand but cap the number of inmates at 4,600. In exchange, Irvine officials agreed to drop their lawsuit.

Sheriff Mike Carona, who promised during his election campaign to reverse the Musick expansion, has pushed for a compromise before March 7. Voters will go to the polls that day to decide Measure F, which would require a two-thirds majority to approve construction or expansion of any jail, airport or toxic landfill within a half-mile of homes.

A county selection committee searching for a site for a new jail identified four possibilities last fall. They are Fremont Canyon near Orange, Chiquita Canyon near Mission Viejo and two sites near Irvine: one north of Limestone Canyon and one north of the former El Toro Marine Corps Air Station.

But city officials say those are not the only options.

"These are not at this point the final sites by any way, means or shape," said Councilman Greg Smith, who serves with Shea on the selection committee.

Orange County has been under a federal judge's order since 1985 to alleviate jail overcrowding.

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Not Enough Beds in Jail Deal, Say 2 Supervisors

Chairman Smith and Coad express disappointment that the plan won't meet a projected need for 5,100 new beds in the next 10 years to ease the overcrowding in county facilities.

February 13, 2000 | JACK LEONARD and JEFF GOTTLIEB | TIMES STAFF WRITERS

A compromise plan to expand the James A. Musick Branch Jail near Irvine met a cool response Saturday from key county supervisors, who said the proposal doesn't go far enough to solve the jail system's chronic overcrowding problem.

Irvine officials signed off on a settlement package Friday, agreeing to end three years of legal wrangling over the facility's fate in return for a scaled-back expansion plan.

But the deal must win approval from the Board of Supervisors, which has backed a seven-fold expansion of the jail.

While the board has yet to review details of the proposed settlement, Chairman Charles V. Smith and Supervisor Cynthia Coad immediately questioned whether the deal would satisfy the county's need for 5,100 jail beds over the next decade.

A federal court order mandates that the county relieve its overcrowded jail system, which is among the worst in the nation.

Smith and Coad said Saturday that the scaled-back Musick plan would likely force officials to expand existing facilities or find a new jail site, possibly in North County.

"It doesn't sound like [the settlement] is going to meet the county's needs," Smith said. "It sounds like it would force maximum-security beds into Santa Ana and Orange, and that's not acceptable to me at all." Both cities, he noted, are already home to county jails.

The compromise, hammered out by Sheriff Mike Carona and officials from Irvine and Lake Forest, caps Musick at 4,600 minimum- and medium-security inmates and sets up a variety of safeguards designed to protect surrounding areas.

The settlement forbids adding extra beds in the next four years and mandates that expansions be phased in gradually.

By contrast, county plans call for transforming the low-security facility housing 1,256 inmates into a maximum-security detention center holding more than 7,500.

If supervisors add their endorsement, the compromise would clear the way for county officials to eventually add critically needed jail beds at Musick.

The deal could prove a critical coup for Carona, who took office last year on the promise to solve Orange County's longstanding overcrowding problem.

Carona negotiated for weeks with Irvine leaders to drop their lawsuit over the Musick proposal and endorse the compromise.

The Irvine council did so on a 3-2 vote.

The new deal won the praise of Supervisor Tom Wilson, who represents the South County area.

"Conceptually, it certainly sounds good," Wilson said. "Musick sits in my district. If the [cities] have worked out something . . . then it would be difficult for me not to support it."

Wilson said he is optimistic that officials can find a new jail site somewhere in the county that can make up the jail beds lost at Musick under the plan.

A committee of South County officials, together with the sheriff, have spent almost a year examining nearly 60 potential locations.

The committee has pared down the possibilities to four sites, including one at Fremont Canyon, near Orange.

"The city of Orange has more than done its share," Coad said, noting that the city is home to the Theo Lacy Branch Jail.

"It's imperative that we have the jail, and we already have a site."

Los Angeles Times | ARTICLE COLLECTIONS

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Sheriff Slashes O.C.'s Projected Jail Needs

Government: Falling crime rates means compromise on Musick would be sufficient through 2025, Carona says.

February 16, 2000 | JACK LEONARD and DAVID REYES | TIMES STAFF WRITERS

Citing the plunging crime rate, Sheriff Mike Carona on Tuesday scaled back the projected number of new beds Orange County's overcrowded jail system will require over the next 25 years and said a compromise plan for expanding an Irvine facility would meet those demands.

Carona cited a new Sheriff's Department forecast suggesting that crime in Orange County--which saw record declines over the last seven years to the lowest level since the 1970s--will continue dropping for at least the next three to five years.

Felony arrests of juveniles are also running well below projections, he said, further reducing the need for additional beds.

Carona now believes the county will need only about 4,650 new jail beds by 2025--less than half the 10,000 that his predecessor, Brad Gates, said was required.

Carona wants to fill the gap with a 1,300-bed expansion of the Theo Lacy Branch Jail in Orange and a far more controversial 3,300-bed addition to the James A. Musick Branch Jail in Irvine.

The sheriff's announcement came the same day he urged the Board of Supervisors to support the Musick proposal, a compromise reached over the last few weeks with neighboring communities. The compromise calls for a far smaller jail than the 7,500-bed maximum-security facility that county had already approved and prohibits any maximum-security beds.

The shift away from high-security cells could help Carona clear several political and financial hurdles. Neighboring residents prefer low-security inmates at Musick, and the costs of building a minimum-security jail cells run almost 50% less than a maximum-security cells.

Carona's plan caps the Irvine jail to 4,600 minimum- to medium-security inmates, to be phased in over the next 15 years. The jail now has 1,256 beds. In return, Irvine and Lake Forest have agreed to drop their lawsuit attempting to block expansion plans.

After a lengthy discussion with the sheriff in closed session Tuesday, supervisors agreed to create a committee made up of local police chiefs and officials to evaluate the compromise. Smith said the board wants to check Carona's figures before giving final approval.

"We want this [settlement] to solve the jail problems through the year 2025," Smith said. "We want no more additional maximum[-security] beds elsewhere."

Sheriff, Supervisors Tired of Eternal Issue

The county has labored for more than two decades under a federal court order to reduce its chronic jail space crunch. Hundreds of thousands of inmates have been released early over the last decade to make room for incoming offenders, and officials recently blamed the tight conditions for jailhouse riots and attacks on deputies.

"I run the most overcrowded jail in America," Carona complained. "I'm tired of having jail overcrowding. I'm tired of being under the threat of a federal [court order]. It's time we had jail beds built."

"You don't want to overbuild but you also don't want to underbuild," he said.

Critics, including Smith, question whether Carona's compromise goes far enough to solve the county's jail overcrowding problem. Others warned that crime projections could just as easily increase as decrease in the future.

"A lot of [the latest numbers are] predicated on the crime rate going or staying down, and that may or may not happen," said George P. Wright, chairman of the criminal justice department at Santa Ana College. "If the economy turns sour, and a few other things go wrong, he could get caught short."

Carona acknowledged that the latest projections--like earlier ones--could radically shift if crime starts to rise. With that in mind, he said he has urged supervisors to keep updating the forecasts every year to make sure the county's target is realistic. Meanwhile, he and a group of South County officials plan to push hard to find a new site to build a jail.

But if current forecasts hold up, Carona said the county could stop the practice of early releases and satisfy the requirements of the court order.

Carona entered office in 1999 and immediately expressed skepticism at the large number of jail beds the Sheriff's Department said it would need in the future. A 1998 Orange County Grand Jury report reached a similar conclusion, questioning whether Gates' proposed 6,000-bed expansion of Musick was really needed.

Carona first said he believed the number should be halved, but now believes even fewer beds will be needed.

And now the additions don't even have to be maximum-security beds, Carona said, noting that the department can get by on the current number of those cells at facilities in Santa Ana and Orange.

"The question is: What beds do we need more of? I can simply tell you that there is a deep need for [minimum- and medium-security] beds," he said in an interview. "Those represent about 85% of our jail population."

Despite concern from some supervisors that the deal does not go far enough, many law enforcement officials voiced their support for the compromise. Any agreement that would add thousands of jail beds, they argued, is a benefit to public safety.

Dist. Atty. Tony Rackauckas said he will lobby supervisors to approve the deal, adding that he hopes it will end the practice of releasing sentenced inmates early.

"There's nothing more frustrating than giving someone 90 days and have them walk out the door of the courthouse a couple of weeks later," Rackauckas, a former Superior Court judge, said. "We need to seize this [agreement]."

Bob MacLeod, general manager of the Assn. of Orange County Deputy Sheriffs, agreed.

"It may well be the beginning of the solution to Orange County's jail overcrowding issue," he said, "and that's more than we have today."

Supervisors are scrambling to review and vote on the settlement by March 7, the election date for Measure F. If approved by voters, the measure would require a two-thirds vote before the county could build new large jails, hazardous-waste landfills or airports near homes.

"The window of opportunity to solve this [Musick expansion] is now," said Supervisor Todd Spitzer.

Times staff writer Jean O. Pasco contributed to this report.

* For more information about the airport debate, click onto The Times' newly expanded Web site at <http://www.latimes.com/eltoro>. The site includes a comprehensive Measure F voter guide, special research sections, interactive bulletin boards, an insider column and the latest news.

* BAD TIMING FOR AIRPORT: Carona's announcement undercuts a key argument of airport backers fighting Measure F. B1

(BEGIN TEXT OF INFOBOX / INFOGRAPHIC)

The Law of Supply and Demand

A Sheriff's Department forecast suggests that crime in Orange County will continue to drop for the next three to five years, dramatically reducing the number of new beds needed in the overcrowded jail system. Here is a look at recent crime trends.

Orange County Reported Crimes

1989

Total*: 138,885

Property: 49,480

Violent: 11,197

*

1998

Total*: 83,388

Property: 26,665

Violent: 9,497

Jail Expansion Proposals

Sheriff Mike Carona says the county will need a total of 4,654 jail beds by 2025. Here's how he plans to reach the goal:

*_**

Current 2025 maximum Theo Lacy Jail (Orange) 1,650 2,960 James A. Musick Jail (Irvine) 1,256 4,600 Men's Central Jail (Santa Ana) 1,315 1,315 Women's Jail (Santa Ana) 335 335 Intake Release Center (Santa Ana) 784 784

...

* Total crime includes property and violent crimes in addition to other crimes

Source: California Department of Justice; Sheriff's Department

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New Proposal to Expand Musick Jail

The county is negotiating with Irvine and Lake Forest for acceptable size. New plan has 200 fewer beds than previous.

November 29, 2000 | DENIENE HUSTED | SPECIAL TO THE TIMES

Hoping for a breakthrough in a decade-long debate, county supervisors are negotiating with Irvine and Lake Forest officials on a new plan to expand the James A. Musick Branch Jail.

The latest proposal, submitted to the Irvine City Council on Tuesday, calls for 200 fewer beds than were recommended in a compromise that died earlier this year. It also would require the county to seek space at other facilities before the full expansion could take effect.

Sheriff Mike Carona said he is committed to finding an acceptable jail location. "We want to solve this problem so we can once and for all locate a site that is not going to be in someone's backyard," he said.

Earlier this year, Carona asked to add 4,600 low-security beds at Musick--far fewer than the 7,500 maximum-security beds sought by his predecessor, Brad Gates. Irvine and Lake Forest supported the 4,600-bed plan, but county supervisors declared it dead in September, saying it did not have the backing of a board majority.

Supervisors have reviewed the latest proposal, drafted by Lake Forest officials, and they are expected to consider it again next week, Lake Forest Councilman Peter Herzog said.

Lake Forest and Irvine officials who supported the plan that died earlier this year had agreed if it passed to drop lawsuits filed against the county to block expansion of the jail, which is between the two cities and can house 1,256 inmates. A Superior Court judge's ruling on one of the lawsuits is set for Dec. 12.

Under Court Order to Reduce Crowding

"The jail is about 800 feet from our nearest residential community," said Herzog, who helped to draft the latest compromise. "It was in our interest to try to resolve this issue, which has been going on for 12 years now."

The county has been under a federal court order for more than 20 years to reduce jail overcrowding. It has released thousands of inmates early in the past decade to make room for incoming offenders. Officials last year blamed the tight conditions for jailhouse riots and attacks on deputies.

Among the provisions of the latest plan are:

* That the county set up an advisory committee to help find places to expand or build jail facilities. The panel would comprise representatives of the county, the Sheriff's Department, Irvine, Lake Forest, Santa Ana, Orange and any other city that has a county jail within its borders.

* That the county start construction at the Theo Lacy Branch Jail near Orange to build space for 3,111 more inmates, including 1,152 maximum-security prisoners.

* That within 90 days, the county begin meeting regularly with the advisory committee to find a spot for a new jail.

Tuesday night, Irvine council members voted not to act on the jail proposal until after the Dec. 12 court ruling.

(BEGIN TEXT OF INFOBOX / INFOGRAPHIC)

Jail Travail

Irvine and Lake Forest have been at loggerheads with Orange County for years over a plan to expand the James A. Musick Branch Jail.

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County Won't Hurry Vote on Jail Deal

Lawyer tells supervisors they don't have to decide on Musick expansion before March 7 election.

February 18, 2000 | JEAN O. PASCO | TIMES STAFF WRITER

Orange County supervisors do not have to act before the March 7 election on a proposal to allow limited expansion of a county jail in Lake Forest, County Counsel Laurence M. Watson said Thursday.

Board Chairman Charles V. Smith said the leeway gives the county more time to study an offer by Lake Forest and Irvine to move forward with the controversial expansion. Supervisors had earlier said they would try to accept or reject the offer before the election.

"This takes the pressure off," Smith said. "I'll give my group whatever time they need."

Watson said in a confidential memo that he gave incorrect advice during a closed session Tuesday with supervisors to discuss the jail agreement crafted between the county and the two cities. Lake Forest and Irvine had earlier sued the county over a larger expansion plan for the James A. Musick Branch Jail, approved in 1998.

Watson said he erred when he told supervisors that the deal had to be accepted by a judge by March 7 or risk being nullified by passage of Measure F. The measure would require approval by two-thirds of voters before the county could build airport projects, large jails within a half-mile of homes and hazardous-waste landfills.

In fact, Watson's memo said, the measure exempts jail expansions approved by all parties through a court settlement.

Although the pressure may be off, Smith said city officials still have insisted that the board act before March 7 and "let us know the offer was off the table if we didn't."

An early settlement would protect the cities from the full Musick expansion if Measure F fails.

"A deadline like that was politically motivated," Supervisor Cynthia Coad said Thursday, supporting letting the review committee set its own schedule.

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Musick Jail Triggers Heated, 5-Hour Debate

Irvine City Council meeting turns into a free-for-all as opponents seek to have expansion deal rescinded.

September 28, 2000 | JEAN O. PASCO | TIMES STAFF WRITER

A debate over the future of the James A. Musick Branch Jail fueled a nearly five-hour verbal free-for-all among Irvine City Council members and residents that sizzled with accusations, insults, conspiracy theories, political grandstanding, audience outbursts and an apology by Mayor Christina L. Shea for losing her cool.

At the center of the storm Tuesday night in council chambers was Larry Agran, a former mayor, current council member and the only mayoral candidate in the upcoming election.

Agran wanted the council to rescind its February approval of a plan allowing Musick to expand from its current 1,200 beds to up to 4,600 beds for minimum- and medium-security prisoners.

That plan was a compromise offer by the council to stave off a county plan to build a maximum-security jail at Musick with up to 8,000 beds.

The county so far has snubbed Irvine's offer. When Agran suggested that the city reconsider its offer, words flew.

At one point after loud boos and hisses from the packed crowd, Councilman Mike Ward pointed out a group of high school students in the audience and lamented that they "are better behaved than some of the adults."

At another point when the crowd started booing, Shea snapped: "Well boo-hoo to you too." She later apologized. "This issue should not be tossed around like some kind of tennis ball so someone can get elected," Shea said in defending the council's February decision to try for a limited expansion of Musick rather than risk a full build-out.

Representatives for Sheriff Mike Carona joined the debate to defend Carona from accusations by Agran-backed council candidate Chris Mears that the sheriff conspired with Shea, Ward and Councilman Greg Smith to "sell out" Irvine for what would be the largest jail in California.

Agran said Carona had promised during his 1998 campaign to oppose any expansion of Musick.

Asst. Sheriff Rocky Hewitt said Carona promised only to fight the county's plans for the largest jail there.

Councilman Dave Christensen, who voted in February against the jail deal, said he now supports it because of the threat that the county could go ahead with a much larger, maximum-security facility.

He chastened Agran, a former council ally, for resurrecting the issue to create publicity for his slate of council candidates.

"They're using a very sensitive issue as an election prop and they don't seem to care that it could cause irreparable harm to the cities of Irvine and Lake Forest by killing the search for a remote jail site," Christensen said.

Earlier this month, a majority of county supervisors said they wouldn't accept the jail offer by Irvine and Lake Forest, which had approved it unanimously.

Lake Forest Mayor Richard T. Dixon attended Tuesday's meeting in Irvine to plead with the council to uphold the offer.

But Mears, an attorney and city planning commissioner, sent an "urgent" letter to residents Monday asking them to urge the council to take back its earlier vote.

Agran insisted that the Musick deal "is still alive" and that a change of heart by one supervisor could seal the deal.

"If ever there was a more urgent situation. I don't know what it is," he said.

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Supervisors Favor Halving Musick Jail Expansion

The Irvine City Council would need to agree, but is not expected to support the measure that's been backed by Lake Forest.

December 06, 2000 | JEAN O. PASCO and JACK LEONARD | TIMES STAFF WRITERS

Orange County supervisors agreed Tuesday to slice nearly in half a plan to place 7,968 prisoners at the James A. Musick Branch Jail near Lake Forest--but only if the proposal is approved by a recalcitrant Irvine City Council.

A majority of the new Irvine council, to be seated Tuesday, has opposed expansion of Musick, which sits on unincorporated county land, saying it would create a jail larger than San Quentin State Prison. The city joined Lake Forest in suing the county's plan to expand Musick, now at 1,256 beds, and to bring in maximum-security prisoners.

The Lake Forest City Council unanimously approved the smaller expansion Monday. Homes in Lake Forest are within 700 feet of the jail.

A split Board of Supervisors followed Tuesday, approving no more than 4,400 medium-security beds, contingent on Irvine's support. Chairman Chuck Smith, Tom Wilson and Todd Spitzer voted for the scaled-back jail expansion; Supervisors Jim Silva and Cynthia P. Coad were opposed.

Spitzer praised the revised plan, noting that both Irvine and Lake Forest are "staring down the barrel" of a maximum-security jail.

"The entire decision about whether or not we can solve the long-term jail overcrowding and [inmate] early release problems in this county is now on the back of the city of Irvine," Spitzer said after the closed-door vote.

Incoming Irvine Mayor Larry Agran said the new council is unlikely to back the compromise.

"It's time for the Board of Supervisors to get busy doing what everyone in Orange County wants them to do--find an appropriate jail site far removed from businesses and residential neighborhoods," Agran said.

Lake Forest Mayor Richard T. Dixon said he hoped the county would keep the expansion offer on the table even if Irvine balks. Sheriff Mike Carona urged Irvine to support the deal.

Silva and Coad said they opposed the agreement because of a provision that requires the county to find a remote site for a new jail. The county should build out Musick, Silva said. Coad worried that several possible remote sites are within her district, including Gypsum Canyon in Anaheim Hills. The county spent \$7 million studying a Gypsum Canyon jail in the mid-1980s before a political shift on the board scuttled the proposal.

Added to the mix is an appellate court decision expected by Tuesday addressing an earlier judge's order for the county to revise its environmental review. The court will rule on a lower-court order for the county to beef up its environmental review of its expansion plan.

If the court rules in the county's favor, county planners could move ahead with the larger Musick plans.

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ORANGE COUNTY/ AROUND THE COUNTY | IRVINE

Hopes High for Jail Compromise

December 07, 2000 | Deniene Husted, (714) 520-2508

Councilman Greg Smith said this week he has hopes that Irvine's new council majority--to be sworn into office Tuesday--will be receptive to a new proposal to expand the James A. Musick Branch Jail to a maximum of 4,400 beds.

The latest proposal, backed this week by the city of Lake Forest and the county Board of Supervisors, would provide for less than half of the 7,968 beds proposed under former Sheriff Brad Gates. It would also prohibit any maximum-security prisoners from being booked at Musick, which now houses 1,256 low-risk inmates. Gates' plan would have the majority of prisoners there considered high-risk.

Mayor-elect Larry Agran and council members-elect Beth Krom and Chris Mears have said they will vote down the proposed compromise, which would put an end to three lawsuits filed by Irvine and Lake Forest against Gates' expansion plans. They insist that no additional beds should be built at the jail, which sits in unincorporated territory between Lake Forest and Irvine and is scheduled for annexation by Irvine.

Smith said a discussion of the matter might persuade them to seek out a compromise.

"Maybe, when they hear all the facts, they'll change their minds," he said.

The council will consider the proposal at its meeting beginning at 6 p.m. in the chambers at City Hall, 1 Civic Center Plaza.

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Irvine Council Debates El Toro Park, Jail

Incoming Mayor Larry Agran and new council members Chris Mears, Beth Krom campaigned for green space at Marine base, no expansion at Musick.

December 13, 2000 | JEAN O. PASCO | TIMES STAFF WRITER

In calculated moves, a newly seated majority on the Irvine City Council on Tuesday resurrected planning for a city park at the closed El Toro Marine base and, separately, debated whether to oppose expansion of a jail that sits at the city's border.

Incoming Mayor Larry Agran and new council members Chris Mears and Beth Krom had promised during their campaigns to reverse earlier council approvals to shift park funding to the state and to allow a limited expansion of the James A. Musick Branch Jail.

Agran said the park, which would cover most of the 4,700-acre base, should be designed and managed by the city of Irvine, based on its history as "the most successful master-planned community in America."

Opponents of building a commercial airport at El Toro, the former Marine base that closed in mid-1999, then can use the city's "great park" plan in a March 2002 ballot measure, he said Tuesday, asking voters to overturn a 1994 vote that required an airport to be built at the base.

"The creation of a great metropolitan park to fill the El Toro site can be of great benefit to the entire county," said Agran, the city's elected mayor from 1988 to 1990.

Although Irvine continues its battle to thwart an airport at El Toro, council action on the Musick jail could spark a more immediate reaction.

A week ago, the Lake Forest City Council voted unanimously to accept a compromise plan for Musick, arguing that it was better to accept limited growth than the full-blown project sought by county supervisors. A majority of supervisors signed off on the deal a day later--but said it would be withdrawn unless Irvine approved it.

The Irvine council spent hours late Tuesday arguing the merits of the compromise. Mears wanted the council to appoint a committee that would work in the next four months to find a remote spot for a new jail where Musick could be moved.

Years of effort to find such a site, most recently by South County cities, fell apart after no suitable spot could be found. Lake Forest officials hoped Irvine would approve the compromise and put pressure on the county to find another jail site farther from homes and businesses. Lake Forest homes are within 700 feet of the Musick jail.

Pressure for Irvine to ink the deal increased Friday after an appellate court cleared the way for the county to build as many as 7,968 beds at Musick. There are 1,200 beds now at the branch jail; the compromise would allow up to 4,400 beds over the next 15 years.

The county's expansion plans for Musick were approved by supervisors before the passage in March of Measure F, which called for two-thirds of voters countywide to agree before the county could build new airport projects, large jails near homes and hazardous waste landfills. A judge threw out Measure F earlier this month as unconstitutional and a violation of state law.

Mears said supervisors would be thwarting the will of voters countywide if they forged ahead with a full Musick expansion. Measure F passed with 67% of the vote.

He said city officials will work with the Irvine Co., which owns most of the county's remaining undeveloped land, to find a remote site. Company officials in the past have declined to comment on their involvement in the search.

A future jail also would not need to be as large as sought by county planners, Mears said. The county now houses about 750 maximum-security prisoners, he said, and as many as 1,152 maximum-security prisoners can be housed at the Theo Lacy Branch Jail in Orange.

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Court Win for County Reshuffles Deck on Jails

The ruling gives it the upper hand after negotiations with Lake Forest and Irvine, which would have produced a compromise in the form of a smaller expansion.

December 18, 2000 | JEAN O. PASCO | TIMES STAFF WRITER

For nearly a decade, residents in Lake Forest and Irvine have fought, sued and pleaded to block county expansion of a onetime rural honor farm into a sprawling maximum-security jail, a compound three times the size of San Quentin.

Now, it appears they have lost the upper hand in that fight.

Armed with a recent appellate court victory, Orange County officials are preparing to start enlarging the James A. Musick Branch Jail. Just how large is open to debate, but this much is clear: It's the county's call.

The jail, pinched between Irvine and Lake Forest and only 700 feet from homes, holds 1,256 inmates. The county would add as many as 6,712 beds, making it by far the largest jail in Orange County. Sheriff Mike Carona said in February that the jail system needs to make room for at least 4,650 new inmates by 2025.

The recent developments over Musick have left Irvine and Lake Forest suddenly at odds on what to do next.

Two weeks ago, before the appeals court had ruled, county supervisors agreed to a much smaller expansion if the cities would drop three related lawsuits challenging the jail plan. Lake Forest jumped at the offer, which would have capped the jail's population at 4,400. Irvine didn't. Instead, a divided Irvine City Council voted to hunt for a remote spot in the county's foothills or canyons to move the jail. Past efforts to find such a remote location have failed.

Had Irvine accepted the compromise offer, the county would have had to honor the 4,400-bed plan. Now, all bets are off.

"The whole premise of the deal was for the cities of Lake Forest and Irvine to drop their lawsuits," James Campbell, chief aide to Board of Supervisors Chairman Chuck Smith, said last week.

Given the county's turn of fortunes with the appellate court ruling, there's little reason to keep the offer of a smaller jail on the table, Campbell said.

Smith was the swing vote in the 3-2 decision to extend the offer of a smaller jail, joined by Supervisors Todd Spitzer and Tom Wilson. Supervisors Jim Silva and Cynthia P. Coad favored the full expansion. Smith, traveling in Vietnam last week, could not be reached for comment.

While the offer has not been withdrawn, most of the supervisors are intent on quickly solving the county's jail crowding problem. The county has been under a federal court order since 1978 to reduce crowding in its jails, forcing the early release of hundreds of thousands of inmates.

Carona, who led an unsuccessful search last year for a remote jail site, said he has done all he can to honor a 1998 campaign pledge to avoid the full build-out of Musick. Though Carona would run any new jail, supervisors have the authority to decide where it should be built and how large it should be.

"There have been 18-hour days for months trying to make this [compromise] work," Assistant Sheriff Rocky Hewitt said. "The sheriff was hopeful Irvine would accept the agreement. He's willing to work with anybody any time [on the jail problem], but time is running out."

The prospect of yet another site search by Irvine has angered officials in Orange. City leaders there spent last year working with Carona and Irvine officials to target remote spots for future inmates. After studying dozens of locations, the most promising candidate--in Fremont Canyon near Orange--was dropped because of city opposition, soaring cost estimates for roads and utilities, and environmental worries.

"It sounds like we're back to where we were a year ago, trying to pawn this off on the city of Orange," said Orange Mayor Mark Murphy, who participated in the previous search committee. "Orange is not going to accept that alternative."

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Orange already is home to the Theo Lacy Branch Jail, which is nearly doubling its inmate population and will eventually have room for 2,960 inmates. Officials say it would be wrong for the city to be sandwiched between two maximum-security jails.

"I'm certainly disappointed that Irvine hasn't seen the wisdom of the compromise that Lake Forest approved of," Murphy said last week.

Meanwhile, officials at the Irvine Co. said they were unaware until last week's Irvine council action that they were expected to help the new jail committee look for a remote site. In his motion to form the group, Irvine Councilman Chris Mears said the development firm would "provide assistance" to the group, since most of the sites thought to be suitable for jail use belong to the Irvine Co., the county's largest landowner.

"We view 'assistance' to mean providing technical information," company spokesman Mike Stockstill said after last Monday's council meeting. "Our

expectation is that this process will be similar to what the city did in 1998 and 1999."

Officials across the county have a dismal record in finding--and keeping--a site for a remote jail. In 1987, the Board of Supervisors voted to build a 6,000-bed jail in Gypsum Canyon near Anaheim Hills, on property owned by the Irvine Co.

Four years and \$7.3 million later, the board abandoned the site after intense opposition. Then-Sheriff Brad Gates turned to Musick as the county's last hope of providing enough long-term jail beds to handle the county's inmate population.

(BEGIN TEXT OF INFOBOX / INFOGRAPHIC)

Expansion Plans

The county has won more legal authority to expand the James A. Musick Branch Jail from 1,200 beds to as many as 7,968 beds. Farmland would be used for expansion.

Where the Beds Are

Orange County currently houses 5,340 inmates among its five jails. By 2025, approved expansion plans call for the county to hold up to 13,362 inmates.

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JAIL Current 2025 Increase Theo Lacy Branch Jail, Orange 1,650 2,960 1,310 Men's Central Jail, Santa Ana 1,315 1,315 O James A. Musick Branch Jail 1,256 7,968 6,712 Intake & Release Center, Santa Ana 784 784 O Women's Jail, Santa Ana 335 335 O

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Source: Orange County Sheriff's Department

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County **W**ithdraws Offer to Downscale Jail Expansion Plan

January 05, 2001 | JEAN O. PASCO | TIMES STAFF WRITER

Orange County supervisors formally withdrew an offer Thursday to scale back plans for expanding James A. Musick Branch Jail in exchange for two cities dropping their lawsuits against it.

The county **wants** to build as many as 7,968 beds for inmates at the onetime honor farm, which now houses 1,256 inmates. The county's environmental review of the project **was** challenged by Irvine and Lake Forest; an appellate court last month ruled that the review was appropriate.

Days before the court ruled, supervisors offered to cap Musick's growth at no more than 4,400 beds if legal challenges by the cities were dropped. Lake Forest agreed to the **deal**, but Irvine's council rebuffed the offer last month, saying it wanted to look for a more remote site to relocate the Musick jail, which is sandwiched between Irvine and Lake Forest.

County supervisors are expected later this month to continue planning for the expansion, which officials hope to complete by 2005. Sheriff Mike Carona said he will stick by the smaller expansion offered to the cities, calculating that only 3,144 new beds will be needed for Musick to handle the county's jail population through 2050.

The three county supervisors who support the Musick expansion said the project, plus an expansion at the Theo Lacy Branch Jail in Orange, will take care of the county's jail **needs** well into this century without looking for a remote site. The county has been under a court order since 1978 to reduce overcrowding among jail inmates.

The expansion of Musick to 7,968 beds would cost about \$40 million, according to county estimates.

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State Justices Uphold Jail Expansion

California Supreme Court lets stand a ruling against South County cities that oppose adding up to 6,712 beds to Musick.

March 22, 2001 | JACK LEONARD and DAVID REYES | TIMES STAFF WRITERS

Ending nearly a decade of legal challenges, the California Supreme Court has rejected a last-ditch appeal by South County cities trying to block a massive expansion of the James A. Musick Branch Jail between Irvine and Lake Forest.

The county wants to add space for up to 6,712 more beds at the jail, which now accommodates 1,256 inmates. But Irvine and Lake Forest have tried to derail the effort with a lawsuit claiming the county failed to examine the effects such an expansion would have on nearby homes and businesses.

Appellate judges ruled last year that the county had already performed a satisfactory analysis of how the project would affect safety, traffic and other issues in nearby neighborhoods, and the state Supreme Court decided last week to let that ruling stand.

The plans, which were drawn up to ease chronic overcrowding in the county's jail system, allow the Sheriff's Department to house up to 7,968 maximum-security inmates at Musick. The site is 700 feet from homes in Lake Forest.

After the Supreme Court decision, South County leaders said they will continue pressing the county for a compromise that will allow for some expansion of Musick.

"We've always felt very strongly about a resolution with the county to work out the needs of our residents and the countywide needs for additional beds," Lake Forest Councilman Peter Herzog said.

Compromise, however, appears unlikely for the moment.

The most recent attempts to forge a compromise died in December, when the Irvine City Council rejected an agreement that would have capped the number of beds at Musick at 4,400, saying the figure was still too high.

"The county has a ways to go before there is any resolution on the Musick jail issue," Supervisor Tom Wilson said in a written statement released Wednesday.

Irvine City Atty. Joel Kuperberg said the South County cities could pursue other legal options to block the project, though he declined to elaborate.

The county has long argued that expansion of Musick would help the Sheriff's Department comply with a federal court order to reduce chronic jail overcrowding. Hundreds of thousands of inmates have been granted early releases to make room for incoming offenders, and officials in recent years have said the tight conditions have led to jailhouse disturbances.

Sheriff Michael S. Carona said the county needs about 4,650 additional jail beds by 2025. His department is adding 500 beds at the Theo Lacy Branch Jail in Orange. Carona said he will make solving the space crunch a priority for his administration, going so far as to vow that he will not seek reelection if he fails.

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Coad Offers Small-Jail Plan With a Catch

Musick expansion would be capped, but Lake Forest and Irvine would have to find a site for future county needs.

April 04, 2001 | DAVID REYES and JEAN O. PASCO | TIMES STAFF WRITERS

A county supervisor is proposing limiting the planned expansion of the James A. Musick branch jail in Lake Forest to 3,600 beds--less than half of what the county could build--but Lake Forest and Irvine would have to find a new jail site.

Chairwoman Cynthia P. Coad floated the idea in a closed board session Tuesday. Her plan was presented to representatives of both cities last week.

In exchange for a smaller jail, Irvine and Lake Forest would have to find--and pay for--an acceptable remote site to handle the rest of the county's future jail needs. The county, however, would be free to return to its current plan for 7,968 beds at Musick if the cities could not find another site.

The county has the authority to dramatically expand Musick and add maximum-security prisoners. The facility sits 700 feet from Lake Forest homes. Irvine and Lake Forest fought that plan, but the state Supreme Court last month allowed the expansion to proceed.

Reactions to Coad's proposal were mixed Tuesday. Lake Forest Councilman Peter Herzog said the city prefers a previous county offer--since rescinded--that would have capped Musick at 4,400 beds. That offer, rejected by Irvine, was endorsed by Sheriff Michael S. Carona and county supervisors.

"All I can say is that discussions are ongoing," said Herzog, declining to discuss the latest proposal.

When asked by a reporter about Coad's offer, Irvine Mayor Larry Agran said the lower bed cap was agreeable but not the condition calling for the cities to find a ready-to-build jail site. Among the requirements is for the cities to get agreement from any city and "recognized community organizations" within one mile of the site.

"Those provisions are troubling, to say the least," Agran said.

He has argued that the county should comply with a ballot measure approved last year that would require two-thirds voter approval for any more than 999 additional beds at Musick. Measure F was overturned in December by a Los Angeles County judge; that decision is under appeal.

Last month, Irvine officials tried to persuade Coad to link Musick's fate to that of 853 housing units that sit unused at the former El Toro Marine base, where the county plans to build an airport.

The county has balked at allowing people to live there. Irvine, which opposes the airport, wants to annex the land; new residents then could vote to become part of Irvine. Without anyone living there, the county can stop the annexation.

Irvine's proposal suggested that the city would be willing to let the base be deemed "uninhabited" for the annexation process.

Coad said she had three meetings with Agran and Irvine Councilman Chris Mears about Musick; linking the housing issue with the jail "was one of the first things that was mentioned." She said Supervisors Tom Wilson and Chuck Smith nixed discussing the two at separate meetings.

"The housing issue needs to be addressed by Irvine but it's not part of the [jail issue]," Coad said.

Smith said he was "not sure yet" about the merits of Coad's proposal but agreed that the housing issue should be resolved separately.

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Irvine, Lake Forest Turn Down Offer to Cap Jail Expansion

The cities reject supervisor's plan to limit Musick facility to 3,600 beds, call for an advisory committee.

April 12, 2001 | DAVID REYES | TIMES STAFF WRITER

Irvine and Lake Forest officials Wednesday rejected county Supervisor Cynthia P. Coad's final offer on a compromise limiting the planned expansion of the James A. Musick Branch Jail and called for the creation of a jail system advisory committee instead.

"I believe that both Lake Forest and Irvine let an opportunity pass them by," a disappointed Coad said after the meeting.

Coad, chairwoman of the Orange County Board of Supervisors, had offered to cap Musick at 3,600 beds, less than half of the 7,968 beds the county is allowed to have there. In exchange, Lake Forest and Irvine would have to find a new jail site.

"I'm disappointed," said Orange Mayor Mark Murphy, who attended the meeting to protect the city's interests after several remote jail sites in Orange had been mentioned by Irvine and Lake Forest in earlier negotiations.

"Both Irvine and Lake Forest basically ignored Coad's idea and came up with plans for more meetings. Frankly, they seem to be more interested in meetings rather than a solution."

The county has the authority to expand Musick, which now accommodates 1,256 inmates, by up to 6,712 beds.

The facility sits just 700 feet from some Lake Forest homes. Irvine and Lake Forest waged a legal battle against the expansion plan, but the state Supreme Court last month allowed the expansion to proceed.

Coad's offer was rejected in a memo sent to her from Lake Forest City Councilmen Richard Dixon and Peter Herzog, and Irvine Mayor Larry Agran and Councilman Chris Mears.

While Murphy and Coad reacted with disappointment, the South County officials said they were optimistic that a solution to the Musick expansion and the county's long-term jail needs could eventually be reached.

"No one said we shouldn't talk about Musick anymore," Herzog said.

"There is a chance for a solution, and if all parties work together, that can still be achieved. We are trying to address the issues being raised, addressing Musick, finding a long-term site and addressing the jail bed needs."

For Coad, however, Wednesday may mark the end of her attendance at Musick discussions.

"I thought this was palatable and a win-win situation," she said. "I certainly feel like I've reached out. But they're still talking like it's negotiation because of the court case. But that ended a long time ago."

The county does not have funds to begin the expansion immediately.

But the Sheriff's Department intends to go forward with plans to refurbish Musick's laundry and kitchen, Coad said.

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Irvine Plan to Annex Musick Jail Opposed

The idea is revealed in the city's environmental report on its Great Park. Sheriff gives a firm 'no.'

February 19, 2003 | Jean O. Pasco | Times Staff Writer

In Irvine's thick environmental report detailing plans for a Great Park on the former El Toro Marine base, city officials have proposed annexing a controversial county jail near Lake Forest.

The plan drew swift opposition from Sheriff Michael S. Carona and Tom Wilson, chairman of the Board of Supervisors.

They said Irvine officials never mentioned the proposal to expand the city limits to include the jail during long negotiations with the county over transferring control of the 4,700-acre Marine base to the city.

Irvine's ideas became public Tuesday, when the city released an environmental impact report on its plan to annex the closed base from county control.

The location of the jail has long been a sore spot with Irvine, which has unsuccessfully sued the county to block an expansion of the James A. Musick branch jail from about 1,250 inmates to more than 7,500 inmates. The expansion was approved but has yet to begin.

"I don't see any possible way I'd support it," Wilson said of the jail annexation plan. "I don't know how they can propose to do something that hasn't even been negotiated with county."

Carona said he was "categorically opposed" to Irvine's plan to annex the jail. He said his staff only recently discovered it while reading Irvine's Great Park environmental report.

Irvine City Manager Allison Hart acknowledged that city officials could have communicated better with the county. The idea of adding Musick to the El Toro plan was viewed as an "opportunity" that could be rejected by the county, she said.

"Our position has always been that it's a policy call whether the county wanted us to annex [it] or not.... We'll submit the [annexation] application based on what the county wants to do."

The future of Musick has been a point of contention between the county and the jail's neighbors, Irvine and Lake Forest. The jail is operated by the county, which has long required regional facilities to stay within county jurisdiction. The closest homes, in Lake Forest, are across the street from the jail.

Otherwise, there was little of surprise in Irvine's environmental review. The proposal would allow about 850 acres to be developed into as many as 3,625 homes and 6.5 million square feet of commercial development.

In exchange, developers will buy the land from the Navy and deed open space, parkland and sports fields to the city. Under the city's proposal, homeowners and business owners would pay fees to support those public areas.

The wrinkle over Musick potentially slows the city's annexation process, Wilson said.

Candidates Seek Irvine City Council Seats

NEW UNIVERSITY Allan Taing | Oct 18, 2004

In order to allow Irvine residents to see and hear from the candidates running for mayor and city council seats, the American Association of Retired Persons Local Chapter 1489 hosted a candidates' forum at the Lakeview Senior Center on Oct. 14. This forum allowed the candidates to discuss their platforms and answer questions from the audience.

There are currently four candidates for mayor and seven for two open seats on city council. Although the offices are officially nonpartisan, current Irvine Mayor Larry Agran, along with three other Democrats, are unofficially running together and urging residents to vote for their 'Great Park Team,' for which Beth Krom is the mayoral candidate. Sukhee Kang and Debbie Coven are also running alongside Agran for a city council seat.

Former Irvine mayor and current city council member Mike Ward is running for mayor under the unofficial Republican slate known as 'Irvine First.' His three running mates for city council include Greg Smith, Mike House and Steven Choi.

Other candidates for mayor include Earle Zucht and Ronald Allen as well as Mohsen Alinaghian for a city council seat. In his opening remarks, Agran lightened up the mood by joking about his age.

'I think I'm already an AARP,' Agran said. 'We get plenty of mail back home. I want to forewarn everybody that if I lose this election, I'm running for the senior council.'

When the discussion turned to the election, Agran reminded residents about some of the city's achievements during his four years as mayor.

'During the past four years, a time of historic progress in the city, we fashioned a strategy and implemented it to defeat the proposed El Toro International Airport and to replace it with a plan for a great metropolitan park,' Agran said. 'We have balanced our budgets even while the state and federal government have been bleeding red ink ... we have added to our reserves.'

Kang, another member of the 'Great Park Team,' began his address with a bow to the audience and explained that it is traditional for him to bow before his respected elders. Kang explained how being an immigrant has shaped his view on local government.

'I really appreciate this country for giving me this opportunity [to be] a good citizen,' Kang said. 'My running for city council is truly my giving back to the community.'

When it was House's turn to speak, he told audience members about his commitment to lower taxes for the community. 'I understand that 50 percent of the revenue that we generate in our city comes from sales tax and that we should do everything to promote business in Irvine ... and I fight to reduce taxes,' House said.

When interviewed by the New University, Agran, speaking on behalf of the 'Great Park Team,' summarized some of his team's priorities.

'What we favor is within the restraints of the existing budget,' Agran said. 'We favor putting more money into the public schools. We do keep the focus on public safety, building out our community parks, a balanced budget [and] ample reserves.' Agran also explained how he plans to make UCI a vital part of the larger Irvine community and attempt to remedy the university's housing issues.

'When there's some major development on the campus, by the way of research or otherwise, if we can incorporate it as part of city policy, we will absolutely do that,' Agran stated. 'I've been a strong advocate for affordable housing in the city in Irvine. Lets face it. Young people, students, faculty [and] staff need places to live.'

Agran also voiced strong opposition against the 'Irvine First' candidates, especially Ward and Smith, whom he claimed wanted to expand Musick Jail, located near the former El Toro military base where the Great Park will be located.

'Mike Ward and Greg Smith, the two principal candidates of the so-called 'Irvine First' team ... voted to pull the plug on the Great Park,' Agran said. 'We don't believe the Great Park ought to be the site for a mega jail, or for a racetrack with para-mutual betting.'

Ward, in an interview with the New University on behalf of the 'Irvine First' team, rejected claims that he wanted to enlarge Musick Jail.

'For lack of a better word, that's a lie,' Ward said. 'Basically, what we did, along with our friends in Lake Forest, we went and negotiated an agreement with the county that said that they would move Musick Jail. We found a site for them to move it to. The agreement would allow them to expand the size of Musick Jail until they did move it, but they could never have any prisoner there above minimum security. When Larry and his crowd came in, they did not like that agreement, and they killed it.' He explained some of the issues he will focus on if he is elected as mayor.

'We know that the citizens of Irvine want a Great Park there and we're well on our way to developing that park,' Ward said. 'But we don't want to lose sight of the fact that we have a city to run. We have problems in Irvine that need to be addressed.' As for helping UCI students with housing issues, Ward insisted that although it would be difficult, he would try to make off-campus housing more affordable.

'Controlling rents in the private sector has never worked,' Ward said. 'So what I will try to do is to lower the fees for builders to build more units, so they can pass those savings onto students at UCI.'

THE ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER

Jail relief proves short-lived

By BRIAN JOSEPH
2007-02-15 03:00:00



SACRAMENTO - The irony isn't lost on Sheriff Mike Carona.

In 2005, a federal judge ended 27 years of court oversight when he ruled Orange County had solved its jail crowding problem. Finally, after years of improvements and new programs, Carona was free to manage inmates without looking over his shoulder.

Then more state prisoners arrived.

In the past 18 months, the number of state inmates in Orange County jails has doubled, to 500 from 250, and the 6,800-bed system is near capacity again.

That's how a state prison crowding crisis can affect even a county without state prisons.

What's more, Orange County's numbers are poised to grow even greater under a plan to shift thousands of state inmates to county jails.

"The initial response is: We cleaned up our problem," Carona said. Still, he said, he realizes the state's crowded prisons are everyone's problem.

More than 170,000 inmates clog a California prison system designed to hold 100,000. Conditions are so bad a federal judge has threatened to take over if something isn't done by June.

Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger has proposed several ways counties could help, including housing more juvenile offenders and building county facilities.

He's also looking at raising minimum state prison terms, so counties, which typically hold inmates for court hearings or those convicted of misdemeanors, are responsible for more convicted felons.

Orange County sheriff's officials say they're willing to help, but only if the state is also willing to pay a share of the costs.

Schwarzenegger has proposed a \$10.6 billion bond to finance prison and jail expansion, but Assistant Sheriff Jo Ann Galisky said it's too early to know how much state support the county might need because the Sheriff's Department is still analyzing inmate data.

This analysis of conviction rates and population trends takes time. The department spent six years analyzing data for the proposed expansion of Musick Jail, which Irvine opposes.

The Sheriff's Department said it could be July before it knows how many additional inmates local jails could receive and how much state money it would need.

Carona said he prefers to work with state inmates during the last year of their sentences. California law requires inmates to return to their county of origin, which means convicted Orange County criminals would be returning anyway.

Carona and company see this as a good opportunity to connect with inmates early and find them the right rehabilitation programs in Orange County. The governor has proposed building small, community-based re-entry facilities for inmates to prepare them to rejoin society.

"We happen to be in a good position because our sheriff has been working on these issues since he's been in office," Galisky said.

Indeed, the county's rehabilitation programs helped pull it out from under court oversight, Carona said.

The jail system under Carona has focused on providing drug rehabilitation for addicts and treatment for the mentally ill. Those programs helped reduce the number of people returning to jail and could do the same for state prisons, the sheriff said.

Orange County lawmakers, including a former county supervisor, support the idea of shifting inmates to the counties, but cautioned it will be hard to convince local leaders that the state is serious about paying them back.

"If I were a county supervisor today," said Assemblyman Todd Spitzer, R-Orange, a former Orange County supervisor, "and the state came to me and told me that they wanted me to build additional county facilities to help with the state prison problem - when I'd stop laughing I might say, 'OK, show me the contract, show me the terms, and then where in the Constitution is this a guarantee?' "

Assemblyman Jim Silva, R-Huntington Beach, another former county supervisor, says the state's track record with Orange County is so bad he can't imagine area voters would support helping the state.

"I can think of several areas where the state has said, 'We need help,' and the counties agreed to it only to have the state of California renege," Silva said. "This, to me, is just another fiasco, where the state is looking to the counties to just bail them out."

Supervisor Chris Norby said he's open to helping the state - if it provides the money.

"We share the same responsibilities," he said. "I don't see it as us versus them."

Situation status

June 26, 2006: Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger calls a special session of the Legislature to address prison crowding. The Legislature does not act before adjourning Aug. 30.

Oct. 4, 2006: Schwarzenegger declares a state of emergency and directs the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation to start transferring inmates to prisons out of state. Only inmates who volunteer for the program are transferred to facilities in Arizona, Oklahoma, Indiana and Tennessee.

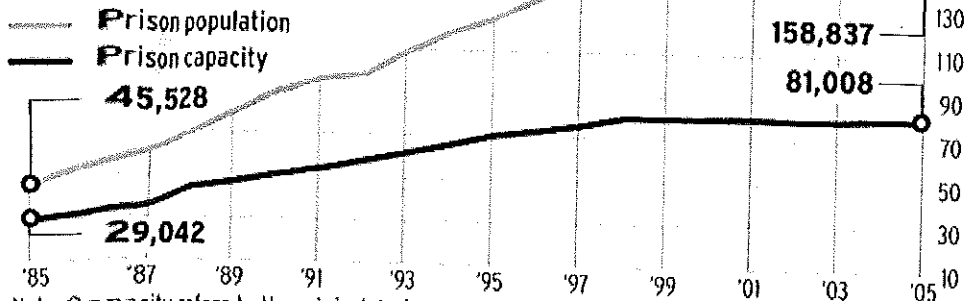
Dec. 11, 2006: U.S. District Judge Lawrence Karlton gives the state until June to fix crowding, or he will start releasing inmates early.

Feb. 2: Prison officials announce the start of up to 5,000 involuntary inmate transfers, starting with 2,000 illegal immigrants, to out-of-state facilities in Arizona, Oklahoma and Mississippi. Officials say only about 380 inmates opted for transfer under the voluntary system.

Feb. 16: A hearing is set in prison guards' lawsuit challenging the transfers.

Prison capacity

California's prison population and prison capacity, from 1985 to 2005:



Note: Capacity refers to the original design capacity of the prisons but does not reflect subsequent conversions and modifications in how the prison is used. For example, a one-person cell could be modified to safely hold two people, but the capacity figure would only reflect one person. Population refers to the number of inmates in prison only, not the total population of inmates under the supervision of the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation.

Source: "California Prisoners and Parolees 2005," California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation
The Register

Contact the writer: 916-449-6046 or bjoseph@ocregister.com

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THE ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER

Council, sheriff at odds over jail

By SONYA SMITH
2007-03-14 03:00:00

City Council members are looking to do anything possible to oppose the Sheriff Mike Carona's plans to expand the James A. Musick jail.

That comes after Mayor Beth Krom met with city officials, county Supervisor Bill Campbell and Carona. Krom said that Carona will rent out excess beds to at the jail that sits just across Irvine's southern border. Krom also said that Carona does not intend to involve Irvine in planning the expansion, except on items such as landscaping.

"I was disappointed with the tone of the meeting," Krom said. "I strongly feel that Irvine should have been at the table (to discuss the Musick expansion plans)."

Carona said he does not plan on adding beds at Musick so he can rent those beds out to other agencies.

"There was never any intention in the jail build-out for renting out beds," Carona said Wednesday. "I have no idea where the mayor (Beth Krom) comes up with this and it's getting to be a little tiresome."

Carona said that negotiations with Irvine on the expansion stopped because Irvine leaders left the bargaining table, expecting to win a lawsuit that would have stopped the jail expansion.

He said his eight years of discussions with Lake Forest officials have led to a compromise: rather than building a maximum security jail to 7,811 beds (the maximum allowed), the jail will be expanded to 4,400 beds at minimum and medium security level (more beds could be added if a study finds they are needed).

"That was a compromise I didn't have to do, but we kept a good-faith effort working with the city of Lake Forest," Carona said.

Carona said that the Musick expansion includes only what is needed in the county, but if he all of a sudden had excess beds, he would rent them out.

"If I was given the luxury of excess beds – there are a series of things I would do; renting them out is certainly one of those, but it's not the only thing," he said.

If beds at Musick Jail, once it is expanded, are rented to the federal government, the county could make about \$2.2 million per 100 federal prisoners each year.

All City Council members have expressed concerns over the Musick expansion.

Councilwoman Christina Shea called the bed rental possibility "more alarming than I can say." Councilman Larry Agran said that the sheriff's intention to discuss only landscaping with the city for the expanded jail is the same as "putting lipstick on a pig."

The **c**ouncil has asked the city staff to put together a strategy on how Irvine can fight the Musick **e**xpansion. The plan is expected to come back to the council in one to two months.

Musick **s**its on 100 acres of unincorporated land about 700 feet from Lake Forest homes and about a mile from **I**rvine businesses.

During **t**he first phase of expansion, which could take up to seven years, 1,000 beds now housed in **d**ecades-old temporary wooden dormitories and tents will be moved into new buildings, said Rick Dostal, **d**irector of finance and administration for the Sheriff's Department.

An **a**dditional 1,000 beds and several administrative buildings would also be added during the first phase, Dostal **s**aid.

Register staff writer Kimberly Edds contributed to this report.

Contact the writer: 949-553-2911 or sosmith@ocregister.com

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Lake Forest official says Musick jail expansion would make city safer

By ERIKA L. RITCHIE
2008-03-11 03:00:00

LAKE FOREST - The decision by the Orange County Board of Supervisors to move ahead with expansion of the James A. Musick Jail drew mixed reviews among city officials and residents.

The topic - a hot issue during the last council elections - is something city officials say they've worked on closely with with the Orange County Sheriff's Department for many years.

The expansion is expected to add 1,500 beds to the currently overcrowded facility and could be in the works as early as May if the county receives \$100 million in state funding. The expansion would be located next to a proposed site for new residential development that is part of the city's Opportunities Study.

The first phase of construction is expected to cost \$250 million, add 2,000 inmate beds and streamline many of the jail's operations.

"This contract will remove the tents and the building portion will make it more secure than it is right now," said Mayor Pro Tem Peter Herzog. "It'll be the same inmate base as it is right now. The action today gives that population base a safer facility. We knew this was going to be on the agenda today."

The site near the northeast part of the city has been a jail facility for decades. The city fought the expansion for a long time but former sheriff Mike Carona won state and federal approval to place 7,500 beds there.

Musick, commonly known as "The Farm" because inmates harvest fruit and vegetables there, now houses 1,256 inmates.

Some nearby residents in Foothill Ranch said they don't welcome the approval.

Sharon Hankins remembers all too well living in Serrano Park within 800 feet of the facility and being woken up by helicopters searching for inmate "walk-offs." Even though she has moved, she still sees them.

Hankins is worried that in addition to the expansion, the enlarged presence could also drive down property values. She said she is disappointed it wasn't added somewhere else and hopes a sheriff's substation will be put in next to it.

"It's a negative impact and disturbance to the community," she said. "It will impact a lot of the northeast section of the city. Everybody wants to live next to a jail. Yea, that's my dream home."

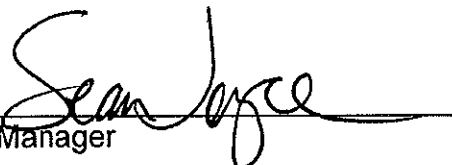
Contact the writer: 949-454-7307 or eritchie@ocregister.com



REQUEST FOR CITY COUNCIL ACTION

MEETING DATE: MARCH 25, 2008

TITLE: JAMES A. MUSICK HONOR FARM EXPANSION UPDATE


City Manager

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

- 1) Adopt RESOLUTION NO. - A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF IRVINE OPPOSING EXPANSION OF THE JAMES A. MUSICK HONOR FARM
- 2) Provide direction to staff as may be appropriate or necessary

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Mayor Krom and Councilwoman Shea both have requested the James A. Musick Honor Farm be placed on the City Council Agenda for an update on the proposed expansion by the County of Orange. On March 11, 2008, the Orange County Board of Supervisors approved the submittal of an application to the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation seeking \$100 million in support of an expansion plan for the existing James A. Musick Honor Farm. The first phase of construction is expected to cost \$236,800,000. The project proposes to add 1,536 beds. However, 1,000 of the existing 1,256 beds would be demolished after construction of the new facilities occurs, resulting in a net increase of 256 beds (a total of 1,792 beds) at the Musick Honor Farm. The Irvine City Council has a long-standing position of opposing plans to expand the Musick Honor Farm. Consistent with that position, staff has drafted a proposed resolution expressing the Council's opposition to any expansion of the James A. Musick Honor Farm, including any effort to establish an early reentry facility.

COMMISSION/BOARD/COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

Not applicable.

STATEMENT OF THE ISSUE:

History:

The issue of expansion of the James A. Musick Honor Farm has been the subject of significant interest and concern to the residents of the City of Irvine for several years. The Musick Honor Farm is within close proximity to residential neighborhoods in the City of Irvine and is adjacent to

the Orange County Great Park and near businesses located in the Irvine Spectrum. There have been multiple meetings between the City of Irvine, the Orange County Board of Supervisors, the Orange County Sheriff's Department and the former Sheriff-Coroner, Michael Carona, to discuss this matter.

Beginning on February 23, 1988, the Irvine City Council approved Resolution Number 88-16 that approved General Plan Amendment 87-GA-0041 which created a new "military" designation, eliminated the "airport" designation, redesignated Marine Corp Air Station (MCAS) El Toro as a "military" land use, and redesignated the James A. Musick facility as a "General Institutional" land use. This action was taken to correct inconsistencies between the Land Use Element and the actual use of MCAS El Toro and the James A. Musick facility.

On May 28, 1996, Marian Bergeson, the member of the Board of Supervisor representing the 5th District made a presentation to the Irvine City Council on the County's plan to expand the Musick Honor Farm. This was the beginning of the County of Orange's formal process to expand the James A. Musick Honor Farm from its traditional role as an "Honor Farm" with 1,256 beds that house Level 1 minimum security inmates to a conventional jail facility with the potential to house over 7,584, Level 1 through Level 4 inmates. Another presentation followed on July 23, 1996, where County of Orange staff discussed site selection regarding the jail expansion, clarified that the Musick facility is located in the City's sphere-of-influence and presented the County's financing plan for the jail expansion.

On September 24, 1996 the City Council discussed the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the Musick Jail expansion and directed staff to forward comments to the Board of Supervisors relative to the draft Environmental Impact Report. Comments included that the release of maximum security inmates should be at the Intake and Release Center in Santa Ana; Jail facilities and County Court facilities should not be located in proximity to residential areas; maximum security inmates should be located in a remote site outside of the County of Orange; and Aliso/Wood Canyons Regional Park or other County Regional Parks should be the location of County jail facilities. The Council further authorized transmittal of a letter to the Board of Supervisors stating the City's opposition to the expansion of the James A. Musick Jail facility and offering the City's assistance in identifying an alternative and more appropriate site outside of residential areas.

The City Council voted unanimously on November 26, 1996 to file a lawsuit, together with the City of Lake Forest challenging the adequacy of the Environmental Impact Report for the expansion of the Musick Honor Farm.

On May 27, 1997, the Mayor requested an update on the Musick Honor Farm alternative site location process. No formal action was taken by the Council at that time. On August 26, 1997, the City Council approved \$27,000 to hire a consultant to work on finding alternatives to the expansion of the Musick Honor Farm.

In November 1997, the City Council took multiple actions to begin the process of annexation of the Marine Corp Air Station (MCAS) El Toro into the City, including the Musick Honor Farm site. Actions included approval of funding to finance the annexation and the adoption of several

resolutions. However, the annexation of the Musick Honor Farm area did not ultimately occur; annexation of that property was eliminated as part of a negotiated Property Tax Transfer Agreement between the County of Orange and the City of Irvine regarding the annexation of the MCAS El Toro base.

The City Council took action to accept a settlement agreement on February 11, 2000 between the Cities of Irvine and Lake Forest and the County of Orange on the expansion of the Music Honor Farm facility. The City agreed to a 4,600 maximum bed unit housing for Level 1 and Level 2 inmate. The City Council took further action on this matter on September 26, 2000 and November 28, 2000 requesting information from the County on the status of the settlement. On December 12, 2000, the City Council approved a resolution to rescind the previously approved jail-expansion agreement and approved the establishment of a remote jail site committee.

The City Council received periodic updates from staff from 2000 through 2007 on the proposed expansion plans for the James A. Musick Honor Farm.

On January 9, 2007, staff conducted a comprehensive City Council Study Session regarding the Musick Jail Master Plan. The Study Session discussed the proximity of the Musick Honor Farm to Irvine residents and the Orange County Great Park. The presentation also provided clarification of the assessment process for prisoners prior to being transported to the Musick Honor Farm. Further, it compared the inmate population to other facilities, clarified the expansion and notification procedures, proposed timeframes for construction, the justification for expansion, site search for other jail facilities, current number of beds at Musick, strategic funding plan for design and construction, expansion of Theo Lacy Jail; options available for resolving the expansion problem; and legal recourse for surrounding agencies. The Study Session concluded with direction that the Mayor and City Manager organize meetings with then-Sheriff Michael Carona and Supervisor Bill Campbell to voice the City Council's objections to any jail expansion plan that changes the existing character of the Musick Honor Farm and to report back to the City Council within 45 days.

On February 1, 2007, Mayor Beth Krom, City Manager Sean Joyce and City staff met with Sheriff Carona and members of his staff, along with Orange County Supervisor Bill Campbell to discuss the City of Irvine's concerns with expansion of the Musick Honor Farm. At the meeting, City representatives expressed concerns over the expansion process and any changes to the existing character of the Musick facility, including the "renting" of beds to other governmental agencies.

At the March 13, 2007 City Council meeting, Mayor Krom requested staff prepare a report to address the issue of the jail expansion project proposed by the Orange County Sheriff. As a result of this request, staff retained the services of Dr. Kevin Meehan to assist in analyzing the need for additional beds at the James A. Musick Jail Facility. Dr. Meehan concluded that over the past two decades the crime rate in Orange County has dramatically decreased by 17.5% despite a 15.5% increase in the population. He further found that there is no statistical justification for the addition of more county jail beds and that the County had not conducted a Needs Assessment since 1998. Lastly, Dr. Meehan found that diversion programs such as the Community Work Furlough Program were being underutilized, but if properly funded and

coordinated, could be effective in intervening to break the cycle of crime and substance abuse and thus minimize the need for additional jail beds.

On March 27, 2007, Councilmember Choi reported on his and Councilwoman Shea's site visit to the Honor Farm.

Mayor Krom sent letters of concern in April of 2007 to State Senators Dick Ackerman and Tom Harman again expressing the City of Irvine's concerns over the expansion of the Musick Honor Farm and to Governor Schwarzenegger with regard to his prison reform plan, which is now known as AB 900.

In September of 2007, Mayor Krom contacted the Orange County Board of Supervisors expressing concern regarding the expansion plans at Musick and also encouraging reconsideration. This request was due to the Board's consideration of selecting an architectural firm to develop a master plan for the expansion of the Musick facility, on which the Board of Supervisors voted unanimously to move forward in October of 2007.

On March 11, 2008, the Sheriff-Coroner's office requested approval from the Board of Supervisors to submit a \$100 million grant request to the State of California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation to fund the James A. Musick Honor Farm expansion. The County is proposing to add to the Musick facility 1,536 State Corrections Standards Authority (CSA) rated beds as part of Phase 1 of a potential of 4,400 maximum beds, along with support facilities and infrastructure, including warehouses, administrative areas, kitchen, central plant and laundry facilities.

The Public Safety and Offender Rehabilitation Services Act of 2007(AB 900) requires that preferences be given in distributing the funds to counties that assist the State in siting Reentry Facilities. As part of the Request For Proposal, the County proposes to allocate 292 beds at the Theo Lacy Jail facility, which is in the City of Orange, as a reentry facility. The City of Orange has stated publicly that the Orange City Council intends to adopt a resolution opposing any reentry facility at the Theo Lacy jail.

To be eligible for funding of the Musick Honor Farm expansion, the County must submit their request to the State by March 18, 2008. The County will present its proposal to the State Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation on April 22 or 23, 2008, and the State notification of grant awards will be on May 8, 2008.

Analysis/Discussion:

The proposed expansion of the James A. Musick Honor Farm has been a concern for the residents of the City of Irvine for several years. Currently the County of Orange is continuing to move forward with expansion plans that include adding additional beds to the facility, changing the character of the facility from an "Honor Farm," changing the facility from a minimum security facility to one that may house Level 4 offenders; and a facility that serves as a potential reentry facility for inmates who are ready to leave the State prison system.

ISSUE 1. THE PUBLIC SAFETY AND OFFENDER REHABILITATION ACT OF 2007
(AB 900)

Under AB 900, the State of California intends to establish "*Secure Re-entry Facilities*" for inmates who are ready to leave the State Prison system.

Defining Secure Re-entry Program Facilities

Secure Re-entry Program Facilities will be designed in cooperation with the local county and/or city officials, Correctional Standards Authority, private industry and contracted service providers. Because each community has differing needs for their re-entry facilities, the programs will be developed to specifically address the needs of those communities. Some smaller counties may choose to develop regional secure reentry facilities. AB 900 will provide for 16,000 new beds in community-based re-entry centers, each of which will house between 50 and 500 inmates for their last 12-24 months in custody. These facilities will provide intensive rehabilitation, and offer every offender job training, mental health and substance abuse counseling, housing placement, educational assistance, and other services in the critical few months just prior to their release. The following is the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation description of a secure re-entry program facility in the State of California:

- ✓ Houses medium level custody to lower level custody offenders, with some opportunity to house high level custody offenders.
- ✓ Provides a maximum of 500 beds with both celled and dormitory style housing.
- ✓ Contains appropriate space to improve the delivery of evidence-based programs and services.
- ✓ Provides administrative support and office space for various critical intervention needs of housed offenders is included in the anticipated design.
- ✓ Complies with court-mandated standards for medical, dental, and psychiatric treatment.

AB 900 states that "jail construction funding preference" shall be given to counties that do the following:

- ✓ Assist the State in siting re-entry facilities
- ✓ Assist the State in siting mental health day treatment and crisis care for parolees
- ✓ Provide a continuum of care so that parolees with mental health and substance abuse needs can continue to receive services at the conclusion of the period of parole.

At the Board of Supervisors meeting on October 2, 2007, then-Sheriff Michael Carona publicly stated that the Musick Facility would be "*perfect*" and "*most likely*" part of the Master Plan if the State establishes a Secure Re-entry Facility in Orange County.

Under the grant proposal approved by the Orange County Board of Supervisors on March 11, 2008, and as a way to obtain "jail construction funding preference," a reentry facility was proposed at the Theo Lacy Jail facility in the City of Orange. The City of Orange is opposed to any reentry facility program at Theo Lacy.

ISSUE 2 COUNTY PLAN FOR JAIL EXPANSION

The Irvine City Council has a long history of opposing expansion at the James A. Musick Honor Farm facility due to its proximity to residential neighborhoods, the Orange County Great Park and the Irvine Spectrum. The Musick Honor Farm expansion is cited by the County of Orange as one of their Top 10 2007 Strategic Priorities. A recently completed needs assessment is being cited by the County of Orange as another reason to expand the Musick Honor Farm. As a result, a grant proposal was approved by the Orange County Board of Supervisors for submittal to the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation to approve funding for expansion of the Musick Honor Farm.

The grant proposal requests approval of:

- ✓ Grant funding of \$100 million for expansion of the Musick Honor Farm
- ✓ Construction of a new 1,536 bed adult detention facility at Musick
- ✓ Housing of medium security inmates at Musick
- ✓ A "state-of-the art jail facility" at Musick
- ✓ Theo Lacy jail as a "reentry facility"

The grant proposal is scheduled to be heard by the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation around April 22, 2008. The proposal is inconsistent with the principles of planning the City of Irvine would like implemented at the Musick Honor Farm. The attached Resolution of the City Council of the City of Irvine that opposes expansion of the James A. Musick Honor Farm further summarizes the concerns of the City on this matter.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW:

The County of Orange approved Environmental Impact Report (EIR) #564 in October 1996 that completed the assessment of cumulative impacts for the expansion of the Musick Honor Farm facility. The impact was found to be individually insignificant under California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and cumulatively insignificant as well. According to the grant proposal to the state, an initial study is in process to review and update (if necessary) the EIR to comply with all CEQA requirements based on current conditions for the selected site.

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED:

None.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

Not applicable.

CONCLUSION:

The Irvine City Council has a long-standing position of opposing plans to expand the Musick Honor Farm. Staff has drafted a proposed resolution for the City Council reaffirming that opposition to any expansion of the James A. Musick Honor Farm, including any effort to establish an early reentry facility.

Report prepared by: Pamela Baird, Senior Management Analyst and Dan Jung, Special Assistant to the Chief of Police

Reviewed by: Wally Kreutzen, Assistant City Manager

Attachments: Attachment 1: Resolution
Attachment 2: Mayor Beth Krom Memorandum
Attachment 3: Councilwoman Christina Shea Memorandum

CITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION NO.

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF
IRVINE OPPOSING EXPANSION OF THE JAMES A. MUSICK
HONOR FARM

WHEREAS, beginning in 1988, the issue of expansion of the number and type of inmates housed at the James A. Musick Honor Farm has been the subject of significant interest and concern to the residents of the City of Irvine; and

WHEREAS, the Musick Honor Farm is within close proximity to residential neighborhoods in the City of Irvine and is adjacent to the Orange County Great Park and near businesses located in the Irvine Spectrum; and

WHEREAS, in 1996, the County of Orange began the process to expand the Musick Honor Farm from its traditional role as an "Honor Farm" with 1,256 beds that house Level 1 minimum security inmates to a conventional jail facility with the potential to house over 7,584, Level 1 through Level 4 inmates; and

WHEREAS, since 1996 there have been multiple meetings between the City of Irvine and the Orange County Board of Supervisors, and the Orange County Sheriff-Coroner, to discuss the expansion of the Musick Honor Farm; and

WHEREAS, in 1996, the County of Orange certified an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) to expand the capacity of the Musick Honor Farm from its existing 1,256 beds to a capacity of up to 7,584 inmates, including medium and maximum security inmates; and

WHEREAS, in February of 2001, the then Orange County Sheriff-Coroner, committed to the City of Lake Forest to permanently limit the Level 1 and Level 2 population at the Musick Honor Farm to no more than 4,400 inmates; and

WHEREAS, in October 2007, the Orange County Board of Supervisors selected DMJM to prepare a "Musick Master Plan" and found that the subject activity was Statutorily Exempt from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Section 15262 of the State CEQA Guidelines; and

WHEREAS, on March 11, 2008, the Sheriff-Coroner's office requested approval from the Orange County Board of Supervisors to submit a Request for Proposal (RFP) to the State of California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, Corrections Standards Authority, under the Public Safety and

Offended Rehabilitation Services Act of 2007 (AB 900) for \$100 million to fund the James A. Musick Facility expansion; and

WHEREAS, the County of Orange is proposing to add to the Musick Honor Farm, 1,536 State Corrections Standards Authority (CSA) rated beds for Level 1 and Level 2 offenders as part of Phase 1 construction out of a potential of 4,400 maximum beds, along with the construction of support facilities and infrastructure, including warehouses, administrative areas, kitchen, central plant and laundry facilities.

NOW, THEREFORE, THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF IRVINE DOES HEREBY RESOLVE AS FOLLOWS:

SECTION 1. The City Council opposes any expansion of the James A. Musick Honor Farm facility from its current 1,256, Level 1 minimum security inmate bed count.

SECTION 2. The City Council opposes the housing of Levels 2-5 Inmates at the Musick Honor Farm.

SECTION 3. The City Council reaffirms its position that sound planning principles require maintaining the character of an "honor farm" at the Musick facility, which character includes providing for rehabilitative and educational programs that enable inmates to receive General Education Development diplomas (GED) and other life training skills, including the current emphasis on the production of vegetables, eggs, laundry, food preparation and other services for use throughout the County correctional system.

SECTION 4. The City Council opposes any action by the County of Orange that would allow for the Musick Honor Farm to "rent" or otherwise make available beds to other city, county, state or federal governments.

SECTION 5. The City Council opposes any action of the State of California or the County of Orange that would allow for the Musick Honor Farm to serve as a "reentry facility" in accordance with AB 900.

SECTION 6. The City Council directs the Mayor to immediately transmit this resolution of opposition to the Orange County Board of Supervisors, the City's state legislative representatives, the State of California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, and the City's government relations representatives in Sacramento.

PASSED AND ADOPTED by the City Council of the City of Irvine at a regular
meeting held on the _____ day of _____, 2008.

MAYOR OF THE CITY OF IRVINE

ATTEST:

CITY CLERK OF THE CITY OF IRVINE

STATE OF CALIFORNIA)
COUNTY OF ORANGE) SS
CITY OF IRVINE)

I, Sharie Apodaca, City Clerk of the City of Irvine, HEREBY DO CERTIFY
that the foregoing Resolution was duly adopted at a regular meeting of the City
Council of the City of Irvine held on the _____ day of _____, 2008, by the
following roll call vote:

AYES:	COUNCILMEMBERS:
NOES:	COUNCILMEMBERS:
ABSENT:	COUNCILMEMBERS:


CITY CLERK OF THE CITY OF IRVINE

RECEIVED

MAR 13 2008

CITY OF IRVINE
CITY MANAGER'S OFFICE

Memo

To: City Manager
From: Mayor Beth Krom 
Date: March 13, 2008
Re: **Musick Jail**

In light of the action taken by the Board of Supervisors to advance the Musick Jail expansion, please agendaize this matter for the March 25th City Council meeting. I would ask that the staff report and update be very comprehensive, including the full history of the Musick Jail expansion proposal and all formal actions taken by the Irvine City Council over the long history of this issue.

Supervisor Campbell has offered to invite the acting Sheriff to make a presentation at the City Council meeting in order to provide specific information related to the expansion plan. I would ask that you coordinate with the Supervisor to arrange for the Sheriff's presence and participation.

Thank you.

cc: City Council
City Clerk

BK:cp

RECEIVED
CITY OF IRVINE
CITY CLERK DEPT.

2008 MAR 17 AM 8:51

RECEIVED

MAR 14 2008

CITY OF IRVINE
CITY MANAGER'S OFFICE

Memo

To: Sean Joyce, City Manager
From: Councilwoman Christina Shea
Date: March 14, 2008
Re: City Council Meeting of March 25, Musick Jail Discussion

Per our discussion on Tuesday March 11, I am requesting that the County's action earlier that day to seek \$100 million in state grant funds for the expansion of Musick Honor Farm be agendaized for the March 25 City Council meeting. Please have staff prepare an update on the County's and Sheriff's actions regarding Musick since the last time the Council discussed this important issue.

Thank you.

cc: City Council
City Attorney
City Clerk